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Marianne Rostgaard (AAU):

*NATO's working committee on cultural relations with the Eastern Bloc – experience gained that came into use in the CSCE-process?*

In 1960, the British Foreign Office called a meeting to take place in London for members of NATO that had signed agreements on cultural exchange with the Soviet Union. During the last years of the 1950's, a number of cultural exchange agreements between the Soviet Union and a western country had been signed - in 1958 with the US and in 1959 with Great Britain. The meeting was called to enhance the coordination of activities between members of the Western alliance and to ensure mutual information about activities. The initiative to sign cultural exchange agreements came from the Soviet Union, and cultural exchanges played a central role in the USSR's peaceful coexistence policy, which in general made the foreign offices in the western countries wary and ponder what the Soviets were up to.

Frederick Barghoorn, who was responsible for a research programme on cultural diplomacy in Soviet foreign policy, encouraged the countries in the Western bloc to take the necessary precautions to counter the soviet cultural offensive of the late 1950's. On the other hand, the opening up of the Soviet Union (compared to the Stalin years) created new possibilities for countries in the Western Bloc, and at the same time it created new perils.<sup>i</sup>

In his book, Frederick Barghoorn clearly views the field of cultural exchange as a battle-field in the cold war. An intermediary aim in this battle for hearts and minds was to gain un-censured and direct access to talking with Soviet citizens as was possible during the famous American Exhibition in Sokolnikov in 1959. In his book, Barghoorn staked his hopes in the cultural exchange battle on the Soviet intelligentsia and the minority of Soviet citizens that according to him 'genuinely aspire to a cultural relationship founded on mutual respect and appreciation of cultural diversity'.<sup>ii</sup> The Americans thus struggled hard during the planning and execution of the American exhibition in 1959, and, in general, to create forums and places where this minority of Soviet citizens and their Western partners and contacts could meet. This, of course, was a source of constant conflict with the Soviet regime, who, on the other hand, tried equally hard to get their messages through and counter the

American efforts to reach audiences in the Soviet Union. The history of the American exhibition in Sokolnikov is filled with descriptions of skirmishes and fights to the bitter end regarding items to be exhibited, whether or not brochures and sales catalogues could be handed out freely to the visitors or not, which arguments the American guides could and should use in discussions with communist party members who visited the exhibit, partly to control and inform superiors about questions asked and the discussions visitors engaged themselves in with the American guides. The Americans viewed the Sokolnikov exhibition as a success and a confirmation of their militant approach to cultural exchange.

In 1971-72, cultural exchanges with the Eastern Bloc played a certain part in the CSCE-negotiations and became part of the European détente-process. Parallel to the German Ost-politik, the aim of cultural exchange programmes was defined as 'Wandel durch Annäherung'. Likewise, the overall strategy of the cultural exchange programmes was, at one and the same time, to acknowledge and take a point of departure in the status quo, thus creating room for change.

For several reasons, Denmark became a key-player in negotiations of compromises between the Western countries in the nearly endless rounds to find a common position from which to negotiate before the conference in Helsinki took place. One of the reasons for this was experience gained in the late 1960's and early 1970's with cultural exchange programmes in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Not just Denmark, but several European countries, had gained experience that allowed them to formulate a new cultural exchange policy which differed from the American tradition, as well as traditional European cultural diplomacy (see below). Besides thus contributing with one small piece to the great puzzle of the history of the détente-period, another aim of offering the Danish example of cultural diplomacy towards the Eastern Bloc is to widen the empirical basis on which we discuss the workings of cultural exchange and cultural relations during the cold war; this will be discussed further in the final section of the paper.

The two issues are intertwined. Cultural exchange programmes played a role in the CSCE-negotiations, although it was not this question that took centre stage, and détente was most likely a prerequisite for new forms of cultural exchange. The first section will outline briefly discussions among the members of NATO's working committee about cultural relations with the Eastern bloc. The second section focuses on Danish cultural diplomacy and experience gained in the late 1960's that led to the formulation of a more profiled and ambitious cultural exchange policy in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1970. The third section focuses on discussions of end and means of cultural exchange programmes 1970-72 in relation to the CSCE-process. The case presented here and the way in which this reflects existing research of the role played by cultural exchange programmes is discussed in the final remarks. Not very much is written specifically about East-West cultural exchange

programmes, but nevertheless, existing research may at least, through comparison, serve to characterise and discuss what singled out the approach on cultural exchange programmes propagated by the Danes ,(among others), in the early 1970's.

A short note on terminology: Cultural diplomacy in a cold war East-West context was, like traditional cultural diplomacy, about promoting your country, but just as much about promoting a system or a way of life. The terms cultural and public diplomacy are often used indiscriminately; some define cultural diplomacy as a sub-section of public diplomacy, others see cultural and public diplomacy respectively as two different kinds of diplomacy, although with a relatively large overlap or floating boundaries. In my view the last standpoint makes the most sense. East-West cultural diplomacy like public diplomacy was about informing and communicating with a public in a foreign country and promoting one's own country or way of life.

Ordinary diplomacy is state-to-state affairs. It was difficult to circumvent the state in communication with people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and as already mentioned, many battles were fought on this subject especially between the USA and the Soviet Union. The ideal for most or all of the western countries was people to people communication, but the actual mix of state and private sphere (people-to-people) varied. So did the content; people-to-people contact was not understood or conducted in the same way between the various NATO member countries, but one way or another, they all had to involve the state, because all cultural exchange agreements with countries in the Eastern bloc had to be negotiated state-to-state.

The existence of state-private networks is well-known in the history of American propaganda during the early cold war, and although changes in the way propaganda was conducted took place after 1953, state-private networks and other traditions lived on, although, around 1960, the Americans changed the word propaganda to the more neutral public diplomacy. In reality, however, there is no difference between white propaganda and public diplomacy – both are about persuasion or bringing others to see the world from one's own point of view. Cultural diplomacy may be defined as 'the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their people to foster mutual understanding'<sup>iii</sup>. Thus, cultural diplomacy stresses mutual understanding (which public diplomacy does not) but may, like public diplomacy, also be used to promote one's own country or one's own ideas, values and ways of life.

The French had the longest tradition for cultural diplomacy before 1940, based on Alliance Francaise and the promotion of French language and civilization. The French cultural houses in Eastern Europe continued to exist after 1945 in order to maintain French cultural influence and prestige in Eastern Europe, and even after 1956 when all other Western countries (except Italy) launched a boycott on any kind of exchange with the Hungarian regime.<sup>iv</sup> France and Italy were often opposing the American positions in discussions in NATO's working committee. Barghoorn criticised France in particular for being "modest in aims and chauvinistic in tone"<sup>v</sup>. That was perhaps true, but the main difference was

in the different approach to cultural exchange agreements where the French approach was much less openly political and stressed traditional cultural and arts diplomacy.

### ***Ends and means of cultural exchange with the Eastern bloc***

NATO's working committee on cultural relations convened once a year in one of the capitals of the NATO member countries. Each member country prepared an annual report for the meeting. Besides presenting the country reports, the host country had the privilege of choosing one or two main themes to be discussed at this year's conference. The yearly meetings in NATO's working committee were meetings for practitioners. They did discuss politics and policies, although questions that were regarded as politically sensitive or high-politics issues were referred to NATO's political committee. The original members of the working committee were Great Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, West-Germany (FRG) and Norway. Denmark became a member in 1963 after signing a formal cultural exchange agreement with the Soviet Union in 1962.<sup>vi</sup>

In 1964, at the annual meeting in Suffern/Washington D.C., the American hosts wanted to discuss a more coordinated effort regarding cultural exchange with the Eastern bloc, primarily the Soviet Union. The American hosts suggested that the members of the working committee should not only inform each other on what they had done but also on what they intended to do, and that future plans might be subjects for discussion in the working committee. The main point in a more coordinated effort was to align the different cultural exchange programmes with the new US-Soviet Union agreement (signed 1964) and thus, according to the Americans, to make sure that the Western partner had the full command of what was exchanged and that a cultural exchange programme could never be turned into a channel of Soviet propaganda. Frederick Barghoorn appeared as one of the American experts on cultural diplomacy together with people affiliated to CCF at the pre-conference in Suffern. One of the American suggestions at the conference in 1964 was in fact to make CCF the coordinating body of western cultural diplomacy towards the Eastern bloc.<sup>vii</sup>

There was full agreement among the member states that the aim of the exchange programmes was to open hearts and minds of people living in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to ideas and influences from a Western way of thinking and living. What made most European delegates wary in 1964, among them the Danish delegate, was, besides of course always adhering to the principle of guarding one's own country's sovereign right to decide in matters of foreign affairs, even those of minor importance, clearly a notion of the Americans being too pushy and too confrontational, both at the conference/annual meeting and in their conduct of East-West cultural relations.<sup>viii</sup>

The principal American point was to claim “free movement of people” and “free information”. For the main part of the cold war, the Americans were fighting a war in the war with the Soviet Union regarding “jamming” of radio stations, whereas BBC’s international service were only jammed for very short periods.<sup>ix</sup> Besides, the Americans had a tendency to favour consumer and popular cultures, whereas the countries in continental Europe around 1964 favoured traditional arts diplomacy, i.e. cultural diplomacy that might have political side-effects but which did not flag any open political messages.<sup>x</sup>

The Europeans mentioned three reasons to sustain cultural exchange programmes. Firstly, exchange programmes may serve as a ‘lightning rod’. If and when negotiations in other areas (e.g. trade relations) froze, it was almost always still possible to discuss cultural exchanges. Secondly, it was regarded as an asset that state control of all kinds of exchanges of persons meant that state agencies were thus able to control the activities of the different friendship societies. In principle, the western countries advocated the right to travel freely, which the countries in the Eastern bloc did not allow. This resulted in an asymmetry where travellers from the Eastern bloc were granted visas even if they were unwanted in the west. The formal exchange was therefore seen as an asset. Formal agreements in the field of cultural exchange meant that ministries in both countries had to approve of every exchange taking place. Thirdly, it provided the opportunity to exhibit or in other ways to present or expose people to Western culture. Some delegates argued that the content of the exchange did not matter very much, what was important was to keep a channel of communication open and to create a kind of refuge where intellectuals in Eastern Europe could weather the storm. As mentioned above, France had ‘cultural houses’, founded before WW II, in some of the capitals in Eastern Europe (Budapest among others), which secured a permanent meeting point and access to Western newspapers, books etc. (as long as one could read French of course). In contrast to the American approach, the French kept a rather low profile and did not engage in any activities that could be interpreted as a critique of e.g. the Hungarian regime. In other words, an possible change in Hungarian society had to come from somewhere else – not through cultural exchanges. The annual meeting in 1964 decided that coordination in the field of cultural exchange should proceed as usual. In other words, there was room for different national strategies in the field of cultural exchange programmes. The picture presented here may give the misleading idea that the NATO countries were split into two opposing positions – an American and a European. This was not the case. If we look at reports from the annual meetings in the mid 1960’s, there were two opposing positions, represented by the Americans and the French, with a continuum in between where the other member countries were to be found. Italy was often close to the French position, and the British to the American, with Denmark, Norway, Belgium, The Netherlands and FRG somewhere in between, also depending on the topical subject for discussion.

### ***Danish experience regarding cultural exchange with the Eastern bloc***

The Danish Ministries of Education, Culture and Foreign Affairs did not command have very many resources at their disposal. Denmark, for instance, had (and has) only one professional ballet dancing company, so that would put a natural limit to the number of visits by The Danish Royal Ballet in Moscow. Partly because money was short, partly out of tradition, the Danish exchange programmes from the mid 1960's came to favour professional and educational exchanges, besides not too expensive exhibitions, concert tours etc. Traditional arts diplomacy was part of Danish cultural diplomacy in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. An example of professional exchanges would be an exchange of a group of architects from Denmark and e.g. Poland, each touring Poland/Denmark for two weeks. There are numerous of these professional exchanges. Building technicians, librarians, school teachers, arts and crafts people etc. Besides professional exchanges, the main part of the budget went into exchanges of scholars, ranging from students to senior researchers. 1965 saw the first formulation of a Danish East-West cultural exchange policy. The aim of cultural exchanges was to 'reopen contacts and strengthen the cultural unity between East and West' and 'the creation of some, even if they are few, direct contacts between scholars, artists and others and, at the same time, the creation of links that will secure loyal information about cultural issues in those foreign countries, in short, the creation of links and contacts that will contribute to the creation of inter-human understanding and tolerance.'<sup>xi</sup> In other words, the formulation of the general aims of a Danish East-West cultural relations policy came close to the positions found in continental Europe.

In 1965, a tradition was started – to invite groups of young people to attend a summer course at a Danish folk high school (Herning Folkehøjskole). As time went by and at least one group of young Poles annually attended these 'summer-schools', more folk high schools became involved (among them Krogerup). The young people visiting in 1965 were 'hand-picked orthodox communists'. This was, however, not regarded as a problem; the Danish hosts were convinced that the best 'cure' was to let the young Poles see for themselves and engage them in debates with the Danish folk high school students, not in order to convert them, but in the Danish folk high school tradition to invite them to form their own opinions.<sup>xii</sup>

One of the recurring discussions at the annual meetings in the working committee was how strictly exchanges should be limited to what had traditionally been labelled cultural exchanges (arts diplomacy). A number of Eastern European countries were asking for visits by delegations of technicians and different youth organisations. The Americans adhered to a strict principle of reciprocity, whereas most European countries were more flexible and did not have anything against

e.g. sending a librarian and receiving an agronomist in exchange. The minutes from the annual meeting in 1969 (in Copenhagen) report that most European countries were of the opinion that 'all of the professional artists and cultural people visiting the West are so thoroughly indoctrinated that it is impossible to influence them by exposing them to Western ways (and even if they were not totally immune, they would not have many chances to spread Western ways of thinking once they have returned home). The 'brain people' of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, think and are allowed to think much more freely and are normally also more influential than the cultural people and therefore of greater interest to us.'<sup>xiii</sup> It was not only Denmark but most countries in continental Europe that chose a pragmatic and flexible approach when it came to the exchange of persons. Denmark did not differ from the majority of countries in continental Europe in this respect.

Besides reciprocal exchange of groups of professionals or youth organisations, Denmark seems to have singled itself out in one more respect. People from the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries took an interest in Danish welfare institutions. Although visits and exchanges regarding e.g. Dansk Blindeinstitut (The Danish Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted) etc. could not be labelled cultural exchange in a narrow sense, they were welcomed and promoted by the Danish foreign ministry. Altogether it seems that the ministry and Danish institutions and professional organisations that partook in exchange programmes wanted to show visitors the modern Denmark (of the 1950's and 60's); new housing areas around Copenhagen, new museums (Louisiana), new architecture, including new school buildings etc. According to the archival material studied so far, this seems to be a reaction both to a demand from the countries behind the iron curtain and to a conscious policy on behalf of the Danish authorities to show Eastern Europeans a modern welfare society.

Much of the dynamism in cultural exchange programmes in the late 1960's, however, seems to have emanated from countries in Eastern Europe. All members of NATO's working committee report that the Eastern European countries, especially Poland, Czechoslovakia (with a short interruption in 1968-69), Yugoslavia and Romania are eager to extend and expand exchange programmes. This is interpreted as a wish to enhance national independence, and it is also noted that the countries are allowed a certain amount of national independence in the field of cultural exchanges. This is, of course, welcomed by members of the working committee. In that sense, it was not Denmark which chose to enhance and expand exchanges especially with Poland and Czechoslovakia, and later also Romania, the reverse was equally true.

The reports of the Danish delegates from the annual meetings in 1969 and 1970 state that 'the small Western European nations were agreed that it was most topical to discuss how to proceed beyond 'traditional cultural exchange' (arts diplomacy) in order to enhance and deepen contacts with people



in Eastern Europe.<sup>xiv</sup> Based on national experience but certainly encouraged by discussions at the annual meetings in 1969 and 1970, the head of department of press and information, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, advocated a new strategy for cultural exchanges with the Eastern bloc. He wanted members of NATO's working committee to focus much more on strategic issues rather than technicalities related to exchange programmes. Members of the working committee, including Denmark, ought to ask themselves what circles in Eastern Europe 'they want to reach and create contact with in order to further détente and changes in the European "front system."<sup>xv</sup>

The strategy advocated by the head of department of press and information was to further exchange programmes in areas that would naturally raise questions of how societies belonging to the two different systems functioned. He pointed out environment and social welfare as such areas. Besides, he pointed out that the departments of cultural exchange and foreign trade ought to cooperate, so that trade exhibitions also told something about the society that had produced the goods. As regards people, he pointed at the 'brain people' and the young generations. 'Young people in Eastern Europe seem to be rather disenchanted with and uninterested in politics and do not react in the same automatic manner as older generations embedded in cold war struggles.' The Danish ministry of Foreign Affairs should therefore maintain existing, traditional forms of exchange as a way to make contact and keep channels open, but the future lies in more exchanges of young people and more information and exchange taking place in areas that, one way or the other, would naturally lead to comparisons of the two societal systems.<sup>xvi</sup>

### ***The CSCE-process and NATO's working committee***

An All-European Conference on Peace and Security was on the agenda when NATO's Council of Ministers met in Rome in May 1970. The proposal was motioned by West Germany, and it was decided to refer the question of cultural exchanges to the next meeting of NATO's working committee in Bonn, in the spring 1971. Based on experience gained, the working committee was asked to work out a 'code of good conduct' in the field of cultural exchanges.<sup>xvii</sup> The Americans, however, were not too enthused (neither were the Brits) with NATO's working committee as a forum for policy formulations and negotiations, and therefore moved the discussion to another forum (NATO's political committee). In a letter home, a civil servant from the Danish NATO Embassy in Brussels asks for directions, but also urges the ministry to act now if they want to promote their own policy regarding cultural exchanges.

The NATO members seem to have been divided on the issue of cultural exchanges, which became part of the so-called Basket III also containing freedom of information and people. The Americans wanted to motion a common proposal from members of NATO giving priority to "free movement of information, people and ideas". At the top of the American agenda was a demand for the Soviet

Union to stop jamming Voice of America and other Western radio stations broadcasting behind the iron curtain. The Americans were convinced that the Eastern bloc only wanted to use cultural exchanges as a way to further the status quo. The Americans, as mentioned, were never too enthused by state controlled and implemented cultural exchange programmes that, in their opinion, and, though that may not have been be the official intention, gave the impression that the states involved mutually recognized each other and thus implicitly legitimised the communist rule in the Eastern bloc. The Americans' scepticism was confirmed by the move that came from the Warsaw pact countries in June 1970. The Warsaw pact countries had, as a starting point for negotiations, proposed 'Expansion of commercial, economic, scientific, technical and cultural relations on a footing of equality for the purpose of developing political co-operation between the European States.'<sup>xviii</sup> Their point of departure was the existing type of cultural exchange agreements that they wanted to expand, but not change.

The staff involved in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs were quite sure that to place free movement of information, specified for instance as a demand on Moscow to stop jamming radio broadcasts, at the top of the agenda would lead to a break-down of negotiations before they had really started. The Danish ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore chose to offer an alternative proposal based on their own new policy, as expressed by the head of department of the Office of Press and Information: 'An expansion of cultural relations on the basis of existing multilateral and bilateral agreements with the view of furthering the normalisation of human contacts and freer exchange of opinions and information on a reciprocal basis, these means being an appropriate way of removing causes of mutual distrust and paving the way for détente and security'.<sup>xix</sup>

France took the opposite position of the Americans and found that the Warsaw pact move was acceptable as a starting point for negotiations. France had left NATO's working committee in 1966 but took part in the efforts to find a common Western position in 1970-71. The Danish delegates in NATO's political committee tried to position themselves as the ideal go-betweens and compromise makers between the American and the French proposals. In this process, the Danish delegates used their own proposal for at text (see above) as a possible compromise. The text did not survive in the exact wording it got April 21<sup>st</sup> by the head of the office of press and information in the Danish ministry of foreign affairs, but the basic ideas and principles did. Among other things, the heading was changed to accommodate the Americans from 'Expansion of cultural relations' to 'Freer movement of information, people and ideas'. The trick was to speak of 'freer' instead of 'free' and under the heading of 'freer movement of information, people and ideas' to argue the new 1970-policy. One of the reasons why the Danes were ideal compromisers is that not only NATO member states needed to agree on a text, but preferably all Western countries. The negotiations to find a common western position took place in at least three different forums: NATO, the so-called 6 + 3 group or

group of nine (at a certain point group of ten) that included members as well as candidate members of EEC (the + 3 were Britain, Ireland and Denmark, and originally also included Norway, which made it into 'the group of ten') and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The only country present in all of these forums was Denmark. Besides, from the outset, the Danish position enjoyed the support of several Western European countries, the most outspoken and powerful among them being FRG. The British originally supported the American position, but the group of nine played a role as a forum for striking a compromise between the French and the British. To make short a long story of time-consuming rounds where diplomats discussed the exact wording in detail, the idea to use cultural exchange programmes to further, at one and the same time, détente and changes in the European "front system" was accepted as the common Western position in December 1971.

The Danish ministry of Foreign Affairs did not disagree with the Americans that it would be preferable for the involved states to only facilitate, not control, cultural exchanges. As the annual reports from meetings in NATO's working committee testify, there were a number of incidents where the person invited was not allowed to travel to the West and at the same time there were people whom the regimes in the East wanted to send, but whom no one in the West wanted to host. During the 1960's, Danish universities (Copenhagen and Aarhus) held on to a principled position whereby they only welcomed persons they themselves had chosen to invite on the basis of their merits as researchers. They argued consistently that universities in Western and Eastern Europe ought to conduct exchanges themselves without interference from the states involved (apart from agreements on the number of scholarships etc.). The Danish foreign affairs officials were, however, convinced that the only way to secure free(r) movement of people, ideas and information was to take a point of departure in the existing confidence-inspiring cultural exchange agreements.

The basic ideas that, in the future, cultural exchange ought to be based on a broad concept of culture which included everyday culture, and to a large extent to be governed by the institutions and organisations involved with the state as a facilitator, not a controller, and thus by widening cultural exchange programmes, thus creating possibilities for freer movement of information, people and ideas, were accepted in December 1971 by NATO's Council of Ministers. As proponents of a new policy and also as compromise makers, Denmark was selected to represent the Western positions in negotiations regarding Basket III.

Following the meeting in NATO's council of ministers in December 1971, the issue of cultural exchange agreements (included in general talks about the upcoming meeting in Helsinki) were discussed at meetings between first the Danish and Polish minister of foreign affairs and shortly after at a meeting with the Rumanian minister of foreign affairs. In the memo written for the minister of foreign affairs to prepare for talks with Poland and Rumania, the Danish ministry of foreign affairs stress that cultural exchange programmes ought to be seen "in an evolutionary perspective" and that

the basic idea is that rather than placing free movement of information at the top of the agenda, securing freer movement (hopefully) will be the result of a long range of specific agreements, among them direct contacts between universities/research institutions etc. Securing unhampered possibilities to listen to broadcasts from Western radio stations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was still part of the agenda, albeit just one issue out of a long list of issues to be discussed, not the top-one item and not phrased as a request to stop the jamming of all western radio-stations broadcasting behind the iron curtain.

The Polish minister of foreign affairs reported that the Polish government were definitely interested in discussing freer movement of information, persons and ideas. The Polish government suggested an exchange of residential news-correspondents and besides, to widen the exchange of radio and TV-programmes etc. The Polish minister stressed that the Polish government took a keen interest in the exchange of information and international news, but information and news circulated had to be “objective” and contribute to mutual understanding and should not create quarrels and animosity. The Polish minister specifically mentioned Radio Free Europe and stated that remnants like that from the cold war ought to be ousted’.<sup>xx</sup> The Polish minister also consented to widening the range of cultural exchanges and to conduct exchanges in the future on an institution-to-institution basis. The Rumanian minister of foreign affairs was also in favour of discussing freer movement of people etc. and enhancing and expanding cultural exchange programmes. The purpose of the talks with the two foreign ministers was of course to sound out reactions of Eastern European regimes to the Danish compromise before the actual negotiations took place.

### ***Final remarks***

So far, the main part of the research in cold war propaganda and cultural and public diplomacy has focused on the early cold war and American propaganda or public/cultural diplomacy primarily towards Western Europe, and secondly the Soviet Union. Very little, apart from German (FRG) – German (GDR) relations has so far been written about Western European cultural diplomacy towards Eastern Europe. As Jessica Gienow-Hecht has remarked, a combined focus on America as the sender and the early cold war period has dominated research in the field to a degree where cultural diplomacy has nearly become synonymous with early cold war American propaganda/cultural diplomacy, although we have examples of types of cultural diplomacy that differed from this, which we may name the USIA-prototype. Examples of different types of cultural diplomacy have been presented in this paper.

As already stated, we know very little about the effects of the cultural exchange programmes of the 1970's and 1980's, and based on the archival material studied so far it is definitely premature to say anything about effects. What is possible, however, is to try to characterise and say something about the type of cultural exchange programme we are talking about, compared to others we know of.

Walter Hixson (1997) draws a line from American propaganda against the Soviet Union at the end of the 1950's to the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1991. Quotes from communist leaders (among them Khrushchev) are offered by Hixson to substantiate his argument that at least some communist leaders knew already around 1960 that they had lost the battle to Western consumer goods.<sup>xxi</sup> The issue discussed in Hixson's conclusion and afterword is to what degree propaganda and cultural/public diplomacy contributed to the downfall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Hixson argues, along with most other scholars who have researched the relation between American propaganda and the collapse of the Soviet Union, that cultural diplomacy did matter, and he argues that the poor performance of the communist production system and 'the images and symbols of the West that filtered through at an ever increasing pace mutually reinforced each other. The stagnation and poor economic performance of the Soviet system that were the main causes of the collapse were internally caused, but without the knowledge and presence of an alternative model to serve as a benchmark, the internal support of the communist regimes might not have crumbled so easily.

Yale Richmond, (2008) who practised cultural diplomacy most of his life-time and spent a number of years in West-Germany, Vietnam, Poland and Moscow, is also convinced about the central contribution of cultural diplomacy to the down-fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Yale Richmond, however, stresses the long and concerted effort, from the end of the 1950's till the end of the 1980's, and the patience required to let public diplomacy do its work.<sup>xxii</sup> Yale Richmond (2003) has also written a less personal book on American cold war cultural exchanges with primarily the Soviet Union. This book presents a tour of all the different means and ways of implementing cultural exchange from youth festivals and exhibitions to performances, movies, books and the exchange of students and scientists. Richmond (2003) stresses the importance of scholarly elite- exchanges, such as those between the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies (ISKAN) in Moscow and American university and government experts on the Soviet Union. Altogether, Yale Richmond stresses the importance of ideas and especially of influencing the elite (the nations' decision makers) and their ideas and ways of thinking.

Hixson and Richmond may both be right at the same time, although the one stresses ordinary people's dissatisfaction with living standards, and the other the elite-exchange; complex historical processes have never had mono-causal roots. Both are based on studies of archival records pertaining

to the institutions that conducted cultural diplomacy, and thus to a certain degree reflect the internal evaluations of the exchange programmes etc. in question.

Hixson's book from 1997 presents an overview interspersed with more detailed studies such as the chapter on the renowned American Exhibition in Sokolniki (outside Moscow) in 1959, which Hixson describes as an 'epic battle' between the Americans and the Soviet Communist Party where, as already mentioned, no detail was too small to cause lengthy discussions, bureaucratic harassment and ways to circumvent obstacles to show off America in the way the Americans wanted it done. From USIA's evaluation of the exhibition that is, to a large degree, based on reports by the American guides at the exhibition and comment books by the visitors, Hixson concludes that the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow was a 'highly successful initiative.'<sup>xxiii</sup> Susan E. Reid offers a different conclusion. She argues that Hixson has marginalised evidence such as critical remarks in comment books, has not read the material carefully enough, and supplements with debates in Russian newspapers and magazines. Susan Reid's strategy is to reconstruct the point of view from which ordinary citizens as well as party officials saw the American exhibit, and she concludes that the reception by the Soviet public was not nearly as favourable as the American self-evaluation concluded. She therefore denounces Hixson's conclusions as teleological history writing or 'Whig-history'.<sup>xxiv</sup> According to Susan E. Reid, the Soviet citizens were much less enthused by American consumer goods and took pride in the progress of their own national technological development. Susan E. Reid thus reminds us that the receiving end does not necessarily pick up the message in the way the sender had intended.

Another example of a study of cultural diplomacy from the receiving end is Anikó Macher (2010), who analyses how Hungary used cultural exchange with the west in Hungary's 'de-satellisation' process. Anikó Macher presents examples of reactions/agency both at state level and by individuals. She stresses the importance of contacts with the western world and places to meet, such as for instance the French cultural institute in Budapest, as a way to secure a room to manoeuvre both at state and individual levels.

Different types of cultural diplomacy have different contents, different aims they want to achieve and different sets of actors with different correlations between the agents and state interests.<sup>xxv</sup> If we take one more look at Danish cultural diplomacy towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union around 1970, the programmes focused on information about and facilitation of experience with a different lived culture, based preferably on a people-to-people contact. The ultimate aim was to create changes in the bloc-system and a regime change in Eastern Europe. To achieve this, a temporary aim was to open up the possibility of freer exchange of people, information and ideas. At

state-level, it was possible to make a type of alliance with Eastern European regimes that were on the look-out for ways in which to implement more nationally independent policies. This alliance at state-level did not, on the other hand, hamper contacts even with dissidents in Eastern Europe. The Danish state sponsored and facilitated the institutions involved and organisations such as the Youth Council or student organisations, but left the actual implementation of exchange programmes to professional associations. As a rule The Danish ministries involved never interfered in the specific exchanges, and this created opportunities for contacts ranging from visits by orthodox communists to visiting dissidents in the Soviet Union (although of course this was never the official object of the specific exchange).

The Danish East-West exchange programme included popular as well as elitist elements; it aimed to create a room for manoeuvring for the Eastern European regimes involved as well as to facilitate contacts and create networks. How this programme may have contributed to the transformation process in Eastern Europe is a question for future research. Literature in the field seems to stress the importance of creating room to manoeuvre at state-level as well as for individuals, and to suggest that an open dialogue may have a better chance of success, perhaps not in winning people over but in succeeding in the sense that it creates room for agency. This ought to make it worthwhile to take a closer look at Danish East-West exchange programmes of the 1970's.

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<sup>i</sup> Frederick Barghoorn, *The Soviet cultural offensive. The role of cultural diplomacy in Soviet foreign policy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1960

<sup>ii</sup> Barghoorn, op.cit. p. 26-27

<sup>iii</sup> Milton C. Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and The United States Government: A Survey*, Washington D.C., 2003 (also called The Harrison report). [www.culturalpolicy.org](http://www.culturalpolicy.org)

<sup>iv</sup> Anikó Macher, *Hungarian Cultural Diplomacy 1957 – 1963: Echoes of Western Cultural Activity in a Communist Country*. IN: Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (eds.) *Searching for a cultural diplomay*. Berghahn Books 2010.

<sup>v</sup> Frederick Barghoorn, 1960 p. 3 - 4.

<sup>vi</sup> One of the reasons why the “working committee” never became a formal NATO committee was its range of members. Some non-NATO members were at times invited to conferences (e.g. Sweden), whereas the two NATO member countries Greece and Turkey never partook in the working committees’ annual meetings. Whom to invite was discussed in 1963 and

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again in 1964. No one says so openly, but the argument seems to have been that neither Turkey nor Greece belonged to the western countries cultural-wise, whereas Australia and Sweden did. The argument in 1963 and -64 against becoming a formal NATO committee is that in that case all NATO member countries will have to be invited to the annual meetings.

<sup>vii</sup> Report from the Danish delegate, RA, UM, gruppeordnede sager 41.C.143. Two sets of minutes from the annual meetings exist: The official minutes, in English, (that were forwarded in the NATO system), and lengthy and often relatively outspoken reports, in Danish, only meant for the eyes of other civil servants in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>viii</sup> According to the report from the Danish delegate, the Belgian delegate, warned the delegates against the risk of building 'a cultural CoCom' if the American proposal was accepted.

<sup>ix</sup> Hixson (1997) Radio Free Europe, radio liberty and other were jammed throughout the cold war. Voice of America and the Russian version of BBC were not jammed 1963 -68 and 1973 – 1980. BBC, International Service (in English) were less jammed than the Russian BBC,

<sup>x</sup> The Italian delegate confessed in 1963 that Italy had an item of cultural export that he was quite ashamed of, namely Italian popular music.

<sup>xi</sup> The new policy is presented in Udenrigsministeriet (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Orientering fra Politisk Juridisk Afdeling, 3 August 1965

<sup>xiixii</sup> Annual report from Denmark prepared for the meeting of NATOs' working group in 1966.

<sup>xiii</sup> Report from the Danish delegation of the joint discussion of 'the future pattern of east-west cultural exchanges', annual meeting in Copenhagen, 1969

<sup>xiv</sup> Not specified which countries. 'Small Western European countries' at least comprised Denmark, Norway and Belgium and most probably also the Netherlands, report from annual meeting 1969.

<sup>xv</sup> Head of Department, Richard W. Hansen's concluding remarks in his report from the annual meeting in 1970 (in Ottawa). In Danish: man burde i højere grad have drøftet en vurdering af herskende 'trends' i den politiske udvikling i Østeuropa og disses indflydelse på de kulturpolitiske muligheder." Han savnede "en drøftelse af hvilke kredse i Østeuropa man navnlig for fremme af afspænding og bevægelse i "frontsystemet" bør satse på."

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xvii</sup> Memo dated 8 March 1971 that recapitulates steps in the process so far.

<sup>xviii</sup> Memo, the Danish ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 April . The Memo summarizes the negotiating positions of NATO and the Warsaw pact countries respectively.

<sup>xix</sup> Memo signed Richard Wagner Hansen, 21 April 1971

<sup>xx</sup> Minutes from meeting between ministers of foreign affairs K.B. Andersen and Stefan Olszowski, 11 April 1972.

<sup>xxi</sup> Hixson (1997) pp. 230-31



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<sup>xxii</sup> Richmond (2008) is even more than Hixson also engaged in an actual debate where he argues the case of cultural diplomacy against military means to the cause down-fall of hostile, authoritarian regimes.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Hixson (1997) p. 212

<sup>xxiv</sup> Susan E. Reid (2008), Who Will Beat Whom? Soviet Popular Reception of the American national Exhibition in Moscow, 1959, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol.9, No. 4, p. 896

<sup>xxv</sup> See also Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht (2010) pp. 16 - 17